



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
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NEWS RELEASE

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Fact Sheet: 2002 State Assessments

The state assessments were administered in the spring to Rhode Island's public-school students in the elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.

There are three groups of tests:

- The New Standards Reference Examinations. These tests, designed and graded by Harcourt Educational Measurement, are given to all students in grades 4, 8, and 10 in mathematics, reading, and writing. Note that each New Standards test consists of either two or three subtests (e.g., Mathematics: Skills, Concepts, Problem Solving).
- The Rhode Island Health Education Assessment, given to all students in grades 5 and 9.
- The Rhode Island State Writing Assessment, given to all students in grades 3, 7, and 11.

All of the tests require that the students write a complete answer and explain their work. All but the Rhode Island Writing Assessment include a small number of multiple-choice questions.

The tests are graded by teams of specially trained educators. They are not graded on a scale, such as 1 to 100. Rather, for every subject and in every grade level, there are "standards" that have been adopted by the R.I. Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. These standards describe the quality of work expected at each grade level.

The score for each test represents the percentage of students in that grade level that have met or exceeded the state standard.

Most of the tests have been administered every year since 1998. Because scores can vary from year to year, we measure progress by "rolling averages."

For each test, we total, then average, the scores from the first three years (1998-2000) and for the next two years (2001-2002). The progress is the change between the two multi-year averages.

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We are releasing statewide scores, scores by district and a sample of some scores broken down by gender, by poverty level, by race, and by special-program status (e.g., special education and limited-English proficiency).

The Education Department will use the data released today to calculate the 2002 school-performance categories. Each school will be categorized as either high, moderately, or low performing. In addition, the data will show whether schools are improving in English-language arts, mathematics, or both.

The department plans to release the 2002 school-performance categories next month.

The 2002 assessment results are posted on the department's Web site, www.ridoenet.net.